

# New Kirkuk Business Center Provides Stronger Economy

CPT Ryan J. Robinson

**T**he Kirkuk Business Center (KBC) was recently formed in Kirkuk, Iraq. This center facilitates business development and investment opportunities in the Kirkuk province. The KBC is a nonprofit organization that provides a variety of services and training to businessmen and women. Initially the KBC was coalition run, but now the coalition has taken on more of an advisory and training role to assist in the development of new services. KBC's 10-employee team, made up of various ethnicities, religions and genders, is dubbed "Team Economics." Team Economics has developed the following services:

Small businesses continue to provide much needed manufacturing expertise. The KBC is working through "Team Economics" to expand local training programs. (U.S. Army photo.)



The EDN has a responsibility to build a strong long-term economy for Kirkuk's citizens by providing children and adults with good education and training opportunities to equip them for success now and in the future. (U.S. Army photo by MAJ Jonathan D. Long, Joint Contracting Command, Iraq.)

- **Business Training Courses** — accounting, budgeting, human resources, management, information technology and business plans.
- **Micro-Loan Program** — loans are available for start-up businesses, business expansions, franchises, etc.
- **Security Assessment** — analyze and recommend security improvements for local businesses.
- **Kirkuk Business Journal** — monthly journal that reports on local contracting project successes and business development issues. Local companies and contractors use this journal to advertise in English, Arab and Kurdish.
- **eBusiness Center** — provides a means for international investors to check e-mail and stay in touch with their home offices while working or visiting Kirkuk.
- **Conference Support** — facilitate conferences for different organizations and business functions.
- **Investor Coordination** — assist investors with business proposals, coordinate with government offices, contractors, local unions, etc., to get projects approved and completed.
- **Business directory** — a "yellow pages" phone book for Kirkuk.

- **KBC Certification** — scoring businesses against a standard of business practices, services and past performance. Much like an AAA rating.

The KBC acts as a nucleus for the economic community in Kirkuk. The KBC has brought together the Economic Development Network (EDN), a group of 15 representatives from both government and non-government organizations. The EDN has a responsibility to the Kirkuk people to work together to build a strong, long-term economy by discussing economic issues and giving recommendations to local government officials. For example, using this KBC network, an investor can build a factory. The investor receives support in:

- Developing a business plan and project proposal.
- Performing environmental impact studies and market analysis reports.
- Ensuring proper permits and licenses are obtained.

- Coordinating with the city planning department.
- Obtaining financing.
- Ensuring project completion through the local Project Coordination Center (PCC).
- Working with the Kirkuk Vocational Training Center to train workers prior to factory completion.

Team Economics is supported by the 116th Brigade Combat Team (BCT), Idaho National Guard (NG), commanded by LTC Steve Knutzen. Team Economics invites you to visit the Kirkuk Business Center online at [www.kbciraq.org](http://www.kbciraq.org).

For more information about KBC operations, e-mail CPT Robinson at [cptrobinson116@hotmail.com](mailto:cptrobinson116@hotmail.com).

**CPT RYAN J. ROBINSON** is the KBC Business Advisor and a member of Team Economics, 116th BCT, Idaho NG. He has a B.A. in finance from Boise State University and has graduated from the Quartermaster Officer Basic and Advanced Courses and the Engineer Officer Advanced Course.



An Iraqi laborer applies sealant to a concrete structure. The KBC is helping Kirkuk citizens rebuild the city's infrastructure. (Photo by Bill Roberts, Gulf Region Division (GRD), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.)